

# Leveraging Higher Education to Promote Social Justice:

## Evidence from the IFP Alumni Tracking Study

FORD FOUNDATION INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIPS PROGRAM  
ALUMNI TRACKING STUDY | REPORT NO. 5 | MARCH 2019



# Leveraging Higher Education to Promote Social Justice: Evidence from the IFP Alumni Tracking Study

Mirka Martel

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Rose Nantaba from Uganda earned her Master's degree in Education from the University of Bristol, UK.

## ALUMNI STORIES

*Throughout the report we include stories of alumni to highlight key themes related to the impact of the International Fellowships Program.*

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**On The Cover:** Vietnamese alumna Vo Thi Hoang Yen holds a group meeting with students in the park. Vo founded the Disability Research and Capacity Development Center to advocate for the rights of people with disabilities. Read more about Vo's story on page 11.

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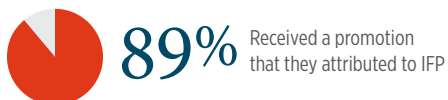
# FINDINGS OVERVIEW

➤ *What is the link between higher education and social justice?* The fifth report in the 10-year Alumni Tracking Study of the Ford Foundation International Fellowships Program (IFP) analyzes the link between higher education and social justice through two lenses: internal to the IFP alumni and their higher education opportunity and external to their social justice leadership and impact.

The 2018 IFP Global Alumni Survey presents responses from

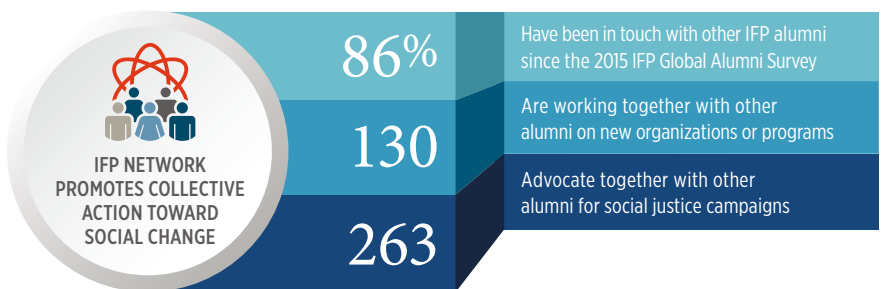
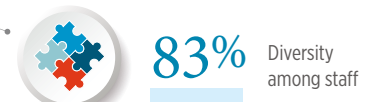
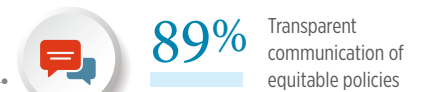


IFP provided alumni with professional opportunity through advanced higher education



As a result of IFP, alumni respondents are influencing equitable practices in their organizations, affecting almost

**30,000**  
EMPLOYEES



IFP alumni respondents are advocates for social justice on a local, national, and global scale



**IFP SOCIAL JUSTICE FOOTPRINT** **48,518** PRODUCTS



# INTRODUCTION

The Ford Foundation International Fellowships Program (IFP), implemented from 2001–2013, was an international fellowship program based on a uniquely inclusive higher education model. Founded on the principle that higher education is an essential long-term investment for addressing major social issues, IFP had two essential goals: ensuring educational opportunity for marginalized community activists and fostering the next generation of social justice leaders.

The 10-year IFP Alumni Tracking Study, implemented by the Institute of International Education (IIE), analyzes the long-term impact of IFP on its alumni, their professional work, and their social justice advocacy.

This fifth report presents new evidence from the 2018 IFP Global Alumni Survey. We specifically focus on the link between higher education access and opportunity, and how this link has affected IFP alumni's social mobility and professional advocacy and leadership in social justice.

## ALUMNI TRACKING STUDY TO DATE

The IFP Alumni Tracking Study is in its fifth year, marking the halfway point of the 10-year project (see inside back cover for an overview of the study). Our findings to date:

- In 2015, we collected survey data from 1,860 IFP alumni. By 2015, 96% of IFP alumni respondents had completed their degrees and 84% had returned to their home countries. 78% were employed and 79% held senior leadership roles in their organizations or communities.
- In 2016–2018, we conducted qualitative fieldwork in 10 IFP countries. Through interviews and focus groups with 903 IFP alumni and local stakeholders, we learned that alumni have made transformative change both in their personal lives and their home communities. We also found, however, that many alumni have faced considerable challenges as a result of local cultural, economic, social, or political pressures. Some continue to face significant challenges in their social justice advocacy.

In 2018, IIE administered the second IFP Global Alumni Survey. The survey was sent to 3,923 IFP alumni for whom the study team had updated contact information (representing 91% of the program population), and 1,284 Fellows responded. The survey was administered in English, Spanish, and Portuguese.



Sylvia Valdivia Ybar (center), a Quechua linguist from Peru, received her Ph.D. in Education Reform from the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. Her research on language and learning has been published widely throughout Latin America.

## IFP AT A GLANCE

IFP provided graduate fellowships to 4,305 emerging social justice leaders in 22 countries worldwide. Fellows were selected from marginalized communities that traditionally lacked access to higher education and who had demonstrated academic and leadership potential as well as a commitment to social causes.



91%  
OF THE PROGRAM  
POPULATION  
WERE SENT THE  
SURVEY



1,284  
IFP ALUMNI  
RESPONDED

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1

*What have been the long-term impacts of the IFP experience on its alumni?*

2

*What contributions to social justice have IFP alumni made as leaders in their communities as a result of their fellowship opportunity?*

3

*What is the link between higher education and social justice? How can higher education fellowship programs address social inequalities and further social justice leadership?*



## Approach and Analytical Framework

This report focuses on IFP's role in addressing social inequality in higher education, and in documenting the ways in which IFP alumni leveraged their higher education experience to promote social justice advocacy in their organizations and communities, and at a national or global scale.

Reflecting the two goals of IFP's vision, our analysis studies the link between higher education and social justice through two lenses: internal to the IFP alumni and their professional mobility, and external to their impact as social justice leaders.<sup>1</sup>

The study team analyzed respondent data by numerous variables including gender, cohort year, home region, and current location. When possible, we compared 2018 findings to the first iteration of the IFP Global Alumni Survey in 2015. For these analyses, paired tests were done on a sample of 785 alumni respondents who completed both surveys. All comparative findings in the report are statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ).

## > IIE'S ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK



## Assumptions and Limitations

We note the challenge of measuring the contribution of the higher education degree to social justice advocacy. Although we measure skills strengthened through IFP and their applicability and use in leadership and advocacy, a limitation is attributing these skills to alumni's higher education experience or work as a whole, given that most were emerging leaders prior to IFP. Our assumption is that the fellowship program has significant additive value to the work that IFP alumni may already have been predisposed to do.

Some IFP alumni who finished their fellowship in 2002 have been out of the program for 17 years. Thus, we note the challenge of losing study participants who are furthest advanced in their careers, as a result of outdated contacts and waning interest in participating in the study. Our survey was completed by 33% of the study population, and we note the limitations of extrapolating these findings to other IFP alumni or to the program as a whole.



**Top:** Naa Lamprey from Ghana earned her Master's degree in Law from Harvard University, U.S.

**Above:** Jagmohan Bangani from India earned his Master's degree in Fine Arts and Theory (Painting) from the University of Southampton, UK.

<sup>1</sup> Dassin, J. (2009). Higher education as a vehicle for social justice: Possibilities and constraints. In *Origins, journeys and returns: social justice in international higher education*. New York: Columbia University Press.

# SURVEY RESPONDENT PROFILE



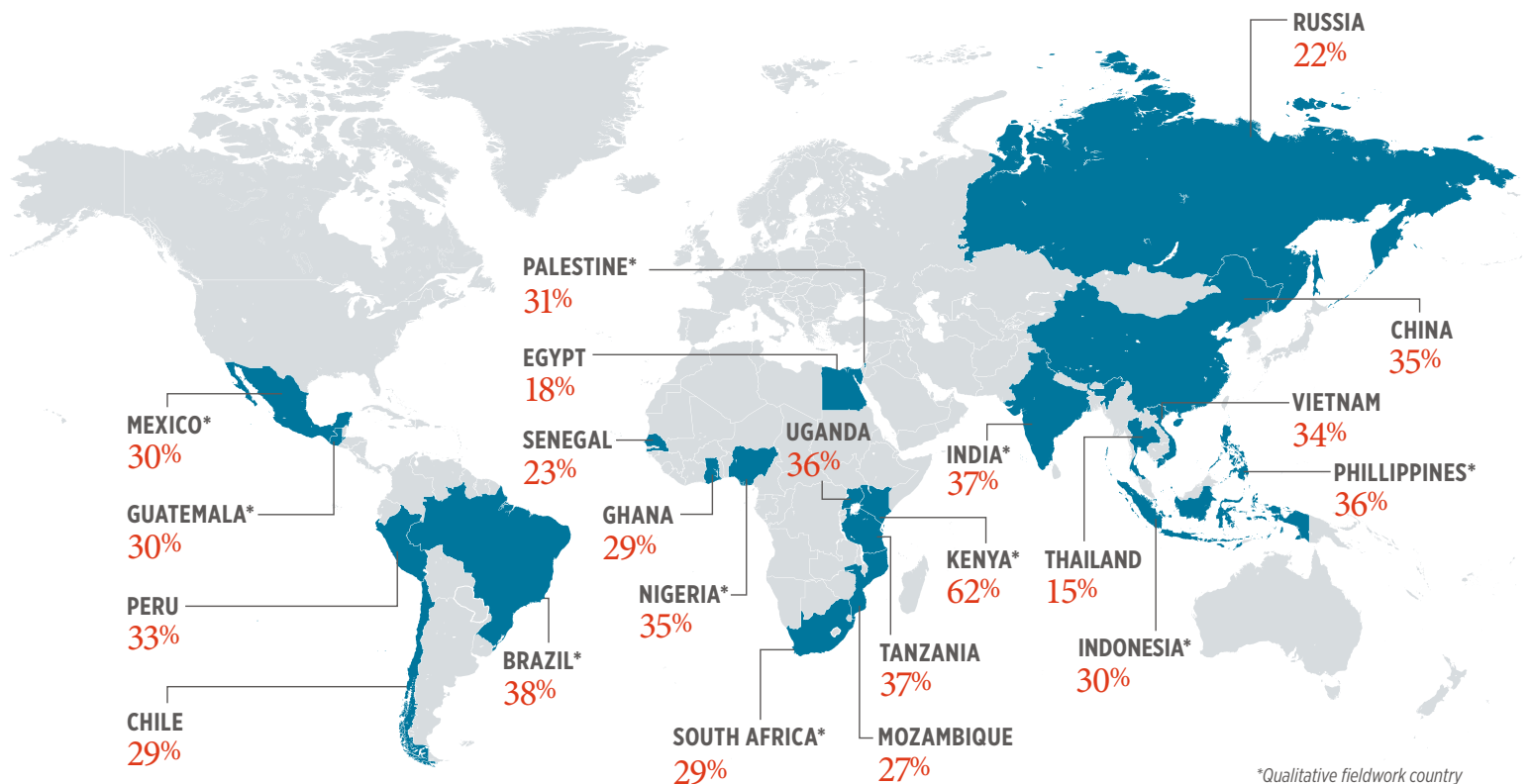
The IFP Global Alumni Survey includes the perspectives of 1,284 alumni respondents. The respondents represent the three regions of the program: 38.9% from Africa and the Middle East, 37.0% from Asia and Russia, and 24.1% from Latin America. The response rate was higher in Africa and the Middle East than in other regions, likely because IIE had just completed field research in several of these countries in 2018 and was able to share information about the upcoming survey.

## RESPONSE RATES

The alumni respondents reflected 33% of the tracking study population. Countries where IIE had done qualitative fieldwork from 2016–2018 had significantly higher response rates than countries where all study outreach was virtual.

Total Responses	Average Response Rate
1,284	33%

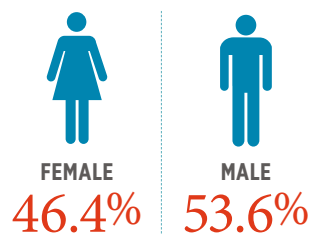
RESPONSE RATES



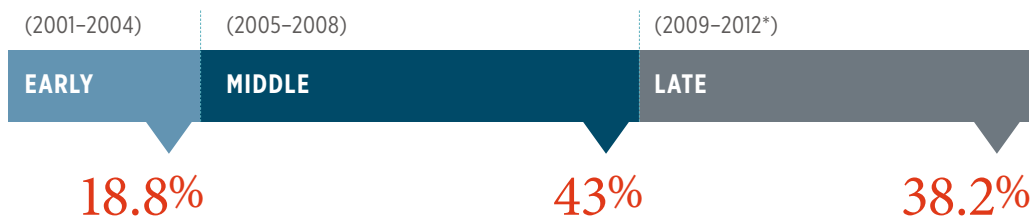


## ALUMNI RESPONDENT PROFILE

### GENDER BREAKDOWN

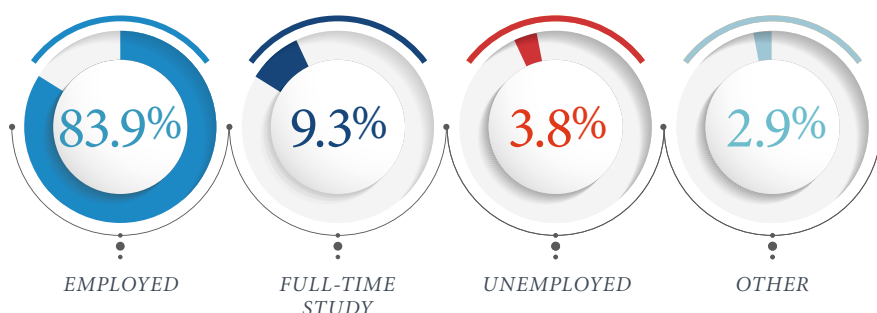


### COHORT YEAR



\*The last IFP Fellows were selected in 2012, with the program concluding in 2013.

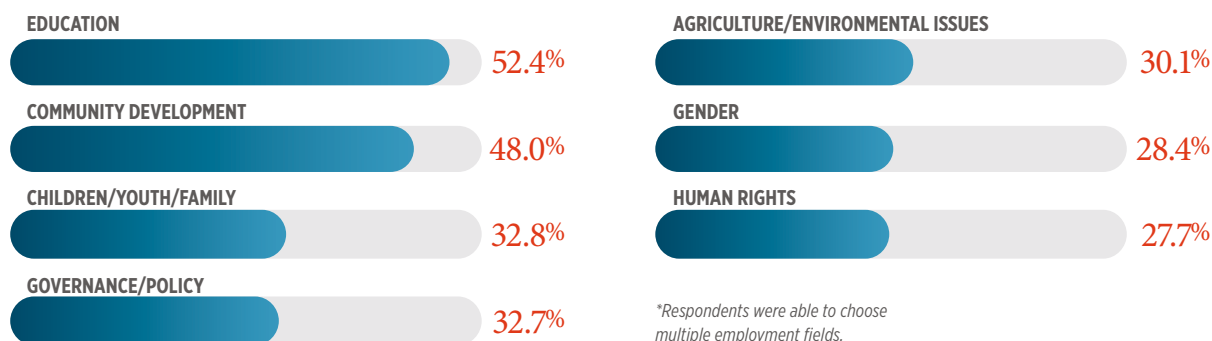
### CURRENT ACTIVITY



### Alumni Employment

More IFP alumni respondents were employed (83.9%) than reported in the 2015 IFP Global Alumni Survey (78%). In 19 of 20 countries, the unemployment rate of alumni respondents was lower than the average national unemployment rate of individuals with an advanced degree.<sup>2</sup> In Brazil, for example, the unemployment rate of alumni respondents was 4.8% compared with a national rate of 15.0% in 2017.<sup>3</sup>

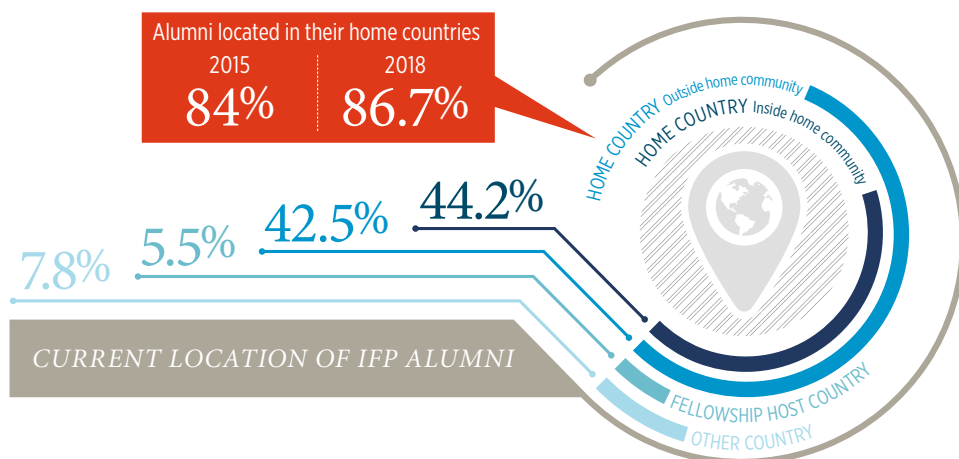
### EMPLOYMENT FIELD



\*Respondents were able to choose multiple employment fields.

### ALUMNI LOCATION

A vast majority of IFP alumni respondents are currently located in their home countries. This percentage is comparable to 2015, indicating that most alumni respondents are choosing to stay in their home countries. Alumni respondents that were outside their home countries were more likely to indicate that their home country is not ready for political change or the work they are doing in social justice.



<sup>2</sup> The International Labour Organization reports the number of unemployed individuals 25+ who have an advanced education degree. Data was available for all countries except Kenya and China.

<sup>3</sup> ILOSTAT (2019). *Unemployment by sex, age and education*. Retrieved March 2019 from [www.ilo.org/ilostat](http://www.ilo.org/ilostat)



## HIGHER EDUCATION ACCESS AS SOCIAL JUSTICE

Many IFP alumni saw the opportunity to study toward an advanced degree as a catalytic turning point in their lives. 79% of IFP alumni were first-generation university students. Although all IFP alumni already had an undergraduate degree, exposure to advanced higher education provided technical skills, academic acumen, and confidence that was critical in supporting their professional and volunteer work. This chapter focuses on IFP's social justice role in supporting Fellows:

- Through their IFP-supported degree, did Fellows strengthen key skills that contribute to social justice leadership?
- Did the IFP-supported degree unlock access to other opportunities, whether professional or academic, that Fellows wouldn't have had otherwise?
- Did the IFP-supported opportunity help Fellows overcome injustice they had faced and prepare them to recognize and face any further injustice in their lives?

**Above:** Manisha Jani from India earned her Master's degree in Social Policy and Social Development from the University of Manchester, UK.



## PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES STRENGTHENED THROUGH IFP

IFP selected emerging leaders already working in organizations and communities on issues of social justice. Many IFP alumni came to the program with leadership skills or potential. As a result, the additive value of IFP was in honing these skills and applying them directly to their social justice work.

### ➤ TOP ATTRIBUTES STRENGTHENED THROUGH IFP\*



\*Respondents were able to choose multiple attributes.

### Most Prominent Attributes Among IFP Social Justice Leaders in Action

82.4% of IFP alumni respondents are currently in leadership roles. 93.5% are pursuing work related to the field or sector they studied during IFP:

- Leaders in professional organizations were more likely to emphasize their skill growth in the quality of their deliverables.
- Leaders in volunteer organizations were more likely to emphasize their growth in the ability to inspire others and in their confidence to challenge the status quo.

### Most Prominent Attributes in Different Fields of Work

- Alumni respondents working in education or community development indicated strengthening their sense of responsibility to stakeholders and/or the community.
- Alumni respondents working in governance and policy indicated strengthening the quality of their deliverables.
- Alumni respondents working in agriculture and the environment indicated strengthening their commitment to social issues.

*“My leadership shifted to that of empowering people to attain knowledge ... competencies on their own. This is part of the pursuit of social justice and building teams in a sustainable way.”*

—ALUMNUS, SOUTH AFRICA

*“Higher education not only gives me endless knowledge which can be used to support my work and actions to be more reliable, but it also helps to improve my inner to be stronger ... [I have] more confidence in expressing my opinions and ideas also leading people to call for social justice that they deserve.”*

—ALUMNA, THAILAND



Clécia Maria Aquino de Queiroz from Brazil received her Master's degree in Art History from Howard University in the U.S.



*“Without [IFP], I would have never been able to get [the] master's because of my position as a teacher in a public institution ... I would never be able to pay for a doctorate in a foreign prestigious institution. My current position is an example to empower other indigenous people in my country to fight against discrimination and marginalization.”*

—ALUMNUS, PERU



Wuyungaowa, an IFP alumna from China, attends the International Symposium and Summer School of Theory and Practices on Safeguarding the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Inner Mongolia.

*“The master’s degree gave me access to inner circles of those who make decisions about the production and environmental program and projects that are executed in my region and state.”*

—ALUMNUS, MEXICO



**42%** OF ALUMNI RESPONDENTS

pursued an additional degree or certification after IFP, 55.4% are studying toward or have completed a doctorate

#### CHALLENGES FACED BY IFP ALUMNI\*



High expectations of those around me



Applying the knowledge gained in IFP



Gaining recognition/accreditation of my degree



Gaining recognition as a professional

\*Respondents were able to choose multiple challenges.

## DID IFP PROVIDE ACCESS TO MORE OPPORTUNITIES?

### Professional Upward Mobility

89% of alumni respondents indicated receiving a promotion as a result of their IFP experience, whether into a higher-level position or a higher salary. Many times, the advanced IFP degree offered opportunities professionally that would not have been available otherwise, making alumni eligible for senior positions, academic professorships, or government posts.

A subset of alumni respondents who answered the 2015 and 2018 surveys (N=785) reported significantly *higher* promotions in 2018, indicating that professional growth has continued to expand even several years after the end of IFP.

Although half of the IFP Fellows were women, female respondents reported promotions significantly less than men. This finding was similar in 2015, indicating that gender disparity in professional growth continues. We also found this in our qualitative research, noting that “women have experienced an additional layer of discrimination in comparison to their male counterparts. In the fight for social justice, women ... had to overcome more societal obstacles to participate in IFP as well as to succeed post-fellowship.”<sup>4</sup>

### Further Academic Study

Almost half (42%) of the alumni respondents **pursued an additional degree or certification** after IFP. 55.4% of these alumni are studying toward or have completed a doctorate. Others have studied toward other master’s or professional certificates. Often the IFP degree was a necessary prerequisite for this additional academic work.

*“I studied in the UK in a high-ranking university ... I finished my master’s with IFP support [and] received another scholarship to do my doctorate. ... IFP prepared me in English language and [research and writing] skills that helped me to apply [to the] Ph.D. scholarship ... I am now the Chair of a department which includes more than 700 students and was the first of its kind in the country.”*

—ALUMNUS, PALESTINE

### Facing Challenges

Notwithstanding the accomplishments that IFP alumni have made, their trajectories have not been easy. Only 8.6% of alumni respondents reported facing no challenges since IFP. In fact, a pairwise comparison of alumni respondents from 2015 to 2018 indicates that these alumni reported relatively more challenges in 2018. In our regional fieldwork, we found that alumni often face pressures upon their return home: securing a job in a sometimes volatile economic and political context and meeting the expectations of those around them. In Africa and the Middle East, we found that expectations of family members and peers led some IFP alumni to be depressed and question their IFP experience. In Latin America, our field research revealed that the recent downturn in labor markets has left IFP alumni unable to secure adequate jobs.

*“I feel that the IFP scholarship was indeed helpful, but that does not mean it directly made us leaders; it gave us certain professional skills that allow us to lead... if the right circumstances arise.”*

—ALUMNUS, CHILE

<sup>4</sup> Russell, J., Martel, M. & Bhandari, R. (2017). *Social Justice Leaders in Action: IFP Impacts in Asia*. Ford Foundation International Fellowships Program Alumni Tracking Study, Report No. 2. New York, NY: Institute of International Education.



## ALUMNI PROFILE

### Paul Celso de Oliveira

Brazil (2004 cohort)

Master's in Law

Pontificia Universidade  
Catolica do Parana  
(PUCPR), Brazil



Paulo Celso de Oliveira comes from the Pankararu indigenous people in Pernambuco, northeastern Brazil. During his childhood, Paulo's family lived in São Paulo and then returned to the Pankararu Indigenous Land. The contrast between Paulo's education in São Paulo—where he had access to school—and the six-mile walk to school in Tacaratu-PE, near the Pankararu Indigenous Land, left a lasting impression. He found that public policies should assist indigenous people living away from urban centers.

Paulo was encouraged to pursue law while participating in the mobilizations of the Indigenous Nations Union (UNI) for recognition of indigenous people's rights,

*"What has kept the injustices against the indigenous peoples is the lack of educational and professional opportunities. That's why IFP carries such a strong significance for me."*

—PAUL CELSO DE OLIVEIRA

where the approval of the 1988 Brazilian Constitution was discussed. In 1994, he became the first indigenous lawyer in Brazil and since then has been acting in defense of the indigenous people's territorial and cultural rights in different regions of Brazil. Paulo applied to IFP to deepen his knowledge in social and economic law. "My friends and family always told me that I could not forget my heritage, my culture and the indigenous people. This is important to keeping a commitment after having graduated, to use the knowledge in favor of our communities. By achieving my Master's degree with IFP's support, I had the opportunity to empower my intellectual autonomy and consolidate my career in defense of indigenous rights."

In 2010, Paulo served as Ombudsman of the National Indian Foundation—FUNAI, collaborating for the dialogue between indigenous people and the government. In 2015, Paulo co-founded one of the first human rights law offices in Brazil. "One of the issues that have kept injustices against indigenous people is the lack of educational and professional opportunities. That is why IFP has a strong meaning for me. It is important from a personal perspective and as an example of a program for indigenous professionals who will collaborate for the autonomy and advocacy of indigenous people in issues related to their rights and interests."

## CONFRONTING MARGINALIZATION

Social justice leaders chosen for IFP were given the opportunity to increase their education and potentially increase their social capital in highly unequal societies. We asked alumni respondents whether IFP helped them confront issues of social injustice they face today or have faced in the past: 87.4% agreed.

Nevertheless, IFP did not erase marginalization. More than half of alumni respondents indicated that they still face injustice every day, mostly related to ethnicity, political discrimination, gender, and race. Their approach to facing this injustice, however, has changed. Alumni respondents noted being more comfortable and vocal in recognizing social injustice, making their communities aware of it, and advocating for social justice to those around them when they see injustice.

*"I have been empowered to identify with the marginalized such as women, the disabled, the poor and orphans. In a way, I have lead campaigns towards the realization that everybody counts."*

—ALUMNUS, UGANDA

*"[IFP] allowed me to understand the context of social injustice prevailing in Guatemala ... to break the dynamic that reproduces and normalizes social injustice, to acquire new skills, tools and a clearer awareness of the situation, with the benefit of converting the innate commitment in a strategy to promote social change."*

—ALUMNUS, GUATEMALA



### Key Takeaways

- IFP alumni respondents gained necessary skills through their IFP degrees that they have used in their ongoing professional and volunteer work.
- Opportunities have included leadership positions in professional and volunteer organizations and further academic credentials.
- Alumni respondents continue to face challenges after IFP, mainly the expectations of those around them for respondents to succeed.
- Although IFP may not have erased the marginalization of alumni respondents, it has equipped them to recognize and confront injustice that they and others face.

# FACILITATORS OF ORGANIZATIONAL AND COMMUNITY CHANGE

The underlying hypothesis of IFP was that if talented individuals from underserved populations with demonstrated academic potential and social commitment were provided with advanced study opportunities, they would go on to contribute to social justice in their organizations and home communities. This chapter focuses on the link between the skills and professional credentials supported by IFP through an advanced higher education degree and related programming, and how IFP alumni used these skills to further their organizations and home communities.

*“I was more of ‘me thinking and them doing.’ But with IFP, I learned to be more consultative, balancing tasks among team members.”*

—ALUMNA, PHILIPPINES



**86.6%** OF IFP ALUMNI RESPONDENTS indicated that employees have **benefitted from these organizational policies**

**28,996**  
EMPLOYEES  
have been affected worldwide



## PROMOTING ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE FROM WITHIN

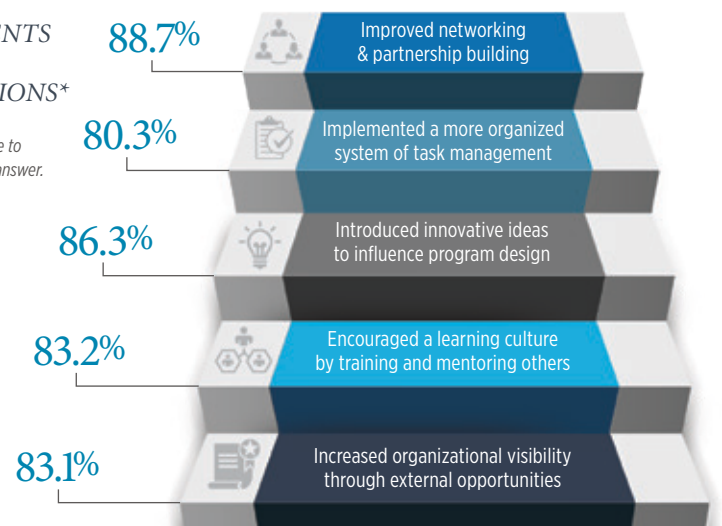
A finding that emerged from the qualitative fieldwork was that IFP alumni are making great strides in promoting improvements in organizational infrastructure, policies, and equity within the organizations where they work and volunteer. In our first global survey, we focused on the impact that organizations where IFP alumni work were making externally, reaching marginalized populations and promoting social justice. Although this impact is still significant (and presented in the next section), we also focused on the internal impact that IFP alumni have made to strengthen their organizational structures.

Most organizational improvements were reported more frequently among alumni respondents who were currently in their home countries than those that were in another country. Alumni respondents who reported these improvements noted that during IFP they learned the ability to inspire others, creativity in developing new solutions, and access to contacts and networks.

695 alumni respondents (54.1%) created new organizations or programs since their IFP fellowship ended. 94% of these organizations were related to social commitment or community service. 69.9% of these organizations were created in the past three years, since the last IFP Global Alumni Survey. 10.7% of these organizations were created with other IFP alumni.

### ➤ IMPROVEMENTS MADE IN ORGANIZATIONS\*

\*Respondents were able to choose more than one answer.

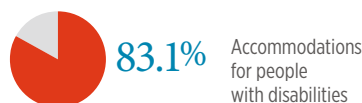
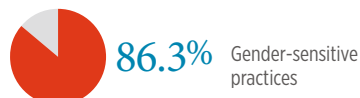




## IMPACTS OF ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

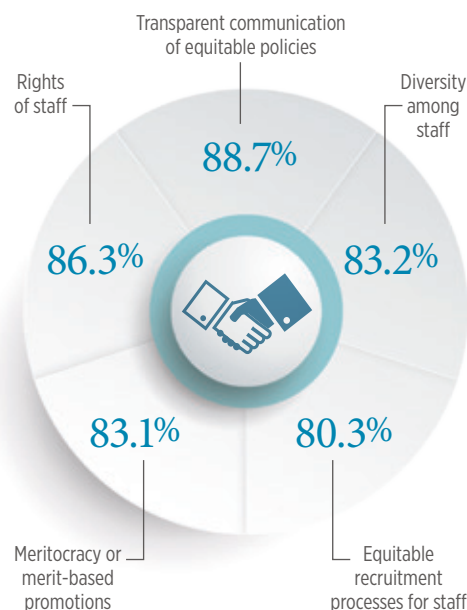
IFP alumni respondents also noted that they increased their organizations' use of equitable and inclusive policies. This was particularly meaningful in our qualitative fieldwork, where IFP alumni noted that they implemented policies in organizations that replicated the transparency of the IFP model.

### POLICIES TO SUPPORT MARGINALIZED POPULATIONS IN ORGANIZATIONS\*



\*Respondents were able to choose more than one answer.

### EQUITABLE POLICIES IN ORGANIZATIONS\*



\*Respondents were able to choose more than one answer.

## ALUMNI PROFILE

### Vo Thi Hoang Yen

Vietnam (2001 cohort)

Master's in Community Development

University of Kansas, U.S.



Vo Thi Hoang Yen was diagnosed with polio at the age of three while living in a remote rice farming village in Vietnam. Despite earning two bachelor's degrees, Vo felt "helpless" in her search for a job because of the stigmatization and discrimination that she faced due to her disability. "I wanted to change the perception that people with disabilities were incapable, helpless and only a burden on society, but I did not know how. Then IFP came along, bringing me a great opportunity to study abroad, expand my knowledge, and realize my dream."

After completing her Master's degree in Community Development at the University of Kansas, Vo turned down a job offer in Washington, DC, and returned to Vietnam to pursue her dream. "I used [IFP] knowledge to continue my academic journey ... to keep researching and fighting for social justice issues with people with disabilities, especially women and children with disabilities in my home country."

In 2005, Vo founded the Disability Research and Capacity Development Center in Ho Chi Minh City. Serving as the director, she has become a leading

*"I used [IFP] knowledge to continue my academic journey ... to keep researching and fighting for social justice issues with women and girls with disabilities in my home country."*

—VO THI HOANG YEN

voice for people with disabilities at national and international levels. Vo and her organization led a campaign called One World for All that created more than 200 jobs for people with disabilities and provided more than 30 grants to self-employers with disabilities in Vietnam. In addition, Vo's organization has provided more than 400 scholarships to people with disabilities through a program she modeled after the IFP.

In recognition of her commitment and leadership, Vo received the Australia Leadership Award in 2014 and the U.S. President's Call to Service Award in 2010. In 2018, Vo was one of six recipients to receive the Ramon Magsaysay Award, a prestigious honor dubbed as the Nobel Prize in Asia and given to leaders working on development and societal issues in the region. Vo was also just named one of the 50 most influential women in Vietnam in 2019 by *Forbes* magazine.



**Top:** Vo Thi Hoang Yen makes a speech at the Australia Scholarship Awards in November 2017.  
**Above:** Vo talking with youth.

*“I mentored [a] few students who succeeded to get fellowships and to study abroad. Some came back to Egypt ... and some just started their lives somewhere else. Sometimes these people ... send me ‘thank you’ emails.”*

—ALUMNA, EGYPT

74.2%

OF ALUMNI RESPONDENTS WHO REPORTED POSITIVE CHANGE IN THEIR ORGANIZATIONS



ARE WORKING WITH THEIR HOME COMMUNITIES

## IFP ALUMNI AS LEADERS IN THEIR HOME COMMUNITIES

86.3% of alumni respondents feel that they have been able to make positive change in their home communities as a result of the knowledge and skills strengthened during IFP. IFP alumni are role models in their communities, promoting advocacy and community development. Women are key role models for young girls in their pursuits to attain higher education and grow professionally.

### ► IMPROVEMENTS MADE IN COMMUNITIES\*



\*Respondents were able to choose more than one answer.



IFP alumnus Lai Dafu earned his Master's degree in Music Education from New York University in the U.S. He runs workshops and performances for children in China.





*“My role and my responsibilities are to be [an] example for my community and improve health for children and women. I have noticed ... the change in behavior [in the community] that is taking place in the face of malaria and other diseases that cause many deaths in our country.”*

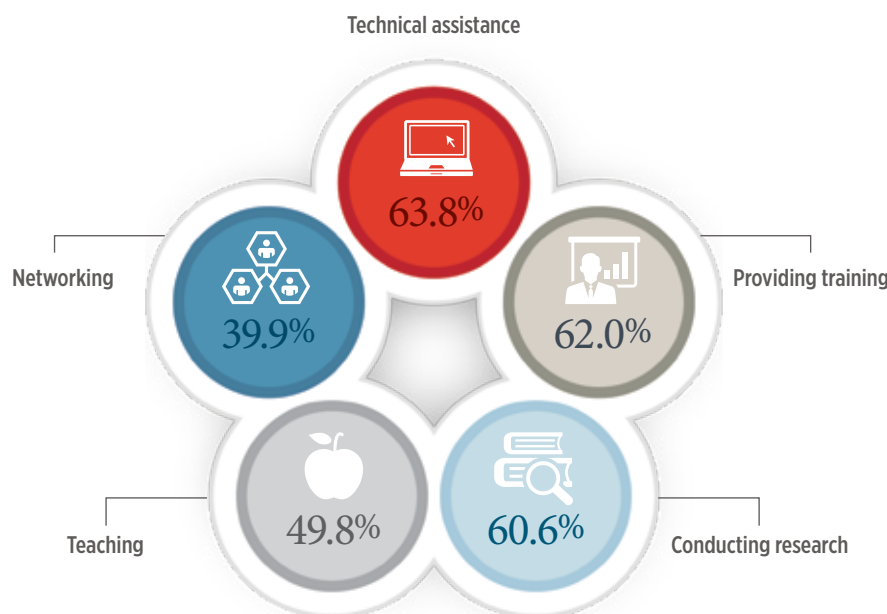
—ALUMNUS, SENEGAL

In a comparison of alumni responses across the 2015 and 2018 surveys, more alumni respondents reported being role models in their communities in the later period. This may indicate that IFP alumni are not only continuing to work in their home communities but also growing as leaders for others. Alumni respondents were able to make a bigger difference when they were located in their home countries, and when they indicated that their home countries are open to change politically and economically.

Alumni are making positive change primarily through their organizations at the local level. Of alumni respondents who reported a positive change in their organizations, 74.2% are working with their home communities. Most of these organizations are providing technical services and advocacy in these communities.

#### HOME COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION ACTIVITIES\*

\*Respondents were able to choose more than one answer.



**Top:** Nadia El-Arabi Mohamed received her Ph.D. in Education from the Ains Shams University in Egypt. She is an experienced art therapist who leads creative workshops in Egypt for people with special needs.

**Above:** Breezy Martínez Paredes received her Master's degree in Business Administration from the Pontificia Universidad Católica in Peru.



#### Key Takeaways

- Most alumni respondents have made significant changes within the organizations where they work or volunteer, especially promoting and communicating equitable practices. These improvements have affected almost 30,000 employees worldwide.
- 695 alumni respondents have created new organizations, and one in ten have been created with other IFP alumni.
- Alumni respondents are considered role models in their communities, contributing to community organizations and local advocacy campaigns.

# ADVOCATES FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

The IFP fellowship was an opportunity for emerging social justice leaders to develop and cultivate their role as leaders of change through knowledge and skill-building. IFP Fellows experienced a range of social injustices at some point in their lives due to poverty, ethnicity, gender, race, religion, sexuality, political discrimination, violence, or war. This section focuses on the extent to which IFP alumni, as a result of their fellowship, have emerged as leaders to fight these injustices not only on a personal level but also in their communities and home countries. Through their own awareness, Fellows lead social justice campaigns to fight marginalization and discrimination on a broader scale.

*“More people are aware about disability issues, including the rights of people with disabilities. We established home-schooling for children with cerebral palsy to get physical therapy and social assistance.”*

—ALUMNA, INDONESIA

## ➤ ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES



70.3%

Networking with local non-governmental organizations

42.1%

Raising funds for social justice-related issues

55.6%

Networking with local public officials

28.6%

Drafting laws at the local/community level



IFP alumnus Tej Ram Jat speaking to Myint Htwe, Minister of Health and Sports, Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar in Yangon about the efforts made by Myanmar to control non-communicable diseases in Southeast Asia.

## COMMUNITY ADVOCATES

Social justice advocacy at the community level is very important to IFP alumni. More than half of alumni respondents (52.4%) noted organizing campaigns at the local/community level. 76.3% of alumni respondents agreed that their home communities look to them when advocating for social justice.

Alumni respondents who indicated promoting change in local advocacy also indicated **strengthening their leadership skills** as a result of IFP, and **shifting their approach to leadership**. These alumni also indicated that they strengthened their **ability to inspire others** and their **commitment to social justice issues**.



*“We are not in the business of charity but inclusive business where there is an equal focus on skill building as well as collectivization. I am as concerned about the personal lives of the women that we work with as I am in their professional lives. I came back to the community that I grew up in and I have a strong belief in restoration ... of local art, craft, heritage and pride in one’s own roots.”*

—ALUMNA, INDIA



## ALUMNI PROFILE

### Samuel Kutinterah Kwotuah

Ghana (2005 cohort)

Master's in Sustainable International Development  
Brandeis University, U.S.

Samuel Kwotuah has dedicated his career to confronting marginalization. Between 2000 and 2004, Samuel managed environmental protection projects and designed economic development plans for poor communities in Northern Ghana. However, he “did not have the skills at that time to do full-scale social justice advocacy.” After completing his IFP studies in sustainable international development at Brandeis University in 2007, Samuel returned to Ghana with a changed point of view, looking at policy issues “through the lens of a free and fair society.”

Upon his return, Samuel took a job with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) managing the West Africa Program Portfolio. He also designed interventions to increase intergenerational wealth in Ghana by implementing educational and health services funded through district business fees and property rates.

In recent years, Samuel has been an ardent advocate for people arrested without due process in Ghana. In collaboration with the Ghana Judicial Service, Samuel



Samuel Kwotuah (center, in suit) attends a remand court with the Deputy Chief of Justice of Ghana (far left) to advocate for due process for prisoners arrested without trial.

helped prepare cases, arrange dockets, and schedule trials for dozens of Ghanaian citizens arrested without formal charges or legal proceedings. As a result of his efforts, the remand population was reduced from 4,218 (33% of prison population) in 2017 to 1,750 (12.9% of prison population) in 2018. In addition, Ghana did not have separate courts to deal with gender-based violence issues, but through Samuel's efforts, 10 gender-based violence courts have been established across Ghana.

IFP enabled Samuel to expand his social justice work from the local to the national level; as a result, he is thinking about starting a similar scholarship program for Ghanaian students pursuing careers in social justice.



Cohort-building workshop of IFP Fellows in 2005.



*“I am the head of a municipal medical pedagogical psychology help center. [I] manage the psychological service of the city, dealing with family issues.”*

—ALUMNA, RUSSIA

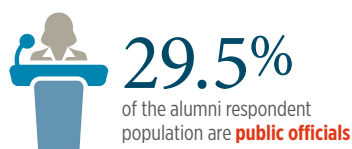
*“We have been able to mobilize a bill to be passed to law on the issues of Persons with Disability in Kaduna State Nigeria ... some disabled members have gained employment with the State Government through our advocacy.”*

—ALUMNUS, NIGERIA

## IFP ADVOCACY AT NATIONAL AND GLOBAL SCALE

Alumni respondents that indicated influencing governmental policies at the national level were most likely to be public officials. Public officials comprise 29.5% of the alumni respondent population. Public officials at the national level were located in alumni’s home countries and were most influential in drafting laws and raising funds. Respondents who are currently public officials also indicated that IFP helped them strengthen their ability to challenge the status quo as well as their leadership skills.

Alumni respondents working in international organizations comprise 16.7% of the survey population. For these respondents, learning language skills and strengthening their international networks were reported as the most important skills and attributes learned during IFP.



Fernando Poblete Arrue from Chile earned his Master's degree in Public Health from Harvard University, U.S.

### ALUMNI PROFILE

#### Nureyan Zunong

China (2005 cohort)

Master's in Health  
and Health Policy

Tulane University, U.S.



Nureyan Zunong comes from the Uyghur ethnic group in Xinjiang, China. Early in her career she worked as a community health officer with Save the Children. In this role, she supported HIV and sex education programs in Xinjiang schools by leveraging her local knowledge to produce HIV prevention manuals in Uyghur, Kazakh, and Chinese language. However, Nureyan wanted to increase her qualifications and gain experience to seek higher impact. She decided to apply to a master's in health and health policy through IFP.

Nureyan experienced several significant events during her IFP fellowship. A day after her arrival in America, she survived Hurricane Katrina and witnessed the emergency response first-hand. Then, she enrolled in a course on humanitarian response where she learned about the protocols and best practices for delivering health services during emergencies. As a result of these experiences and interest, upon returning to China and Save the Children, Nureyan asked to lead the health component of Save the Children's response to the Sichuan Earthquake in 2008. With this experience, she started her humanitarian journey. She has worked with Save the Children and Plan International in several key health positions in politically sensitive, culturally diverse, and geographically harsh conditions, such as South Sudan, Philippines, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Kenya, Nepal, Iraq, DRC, and Ukraine.

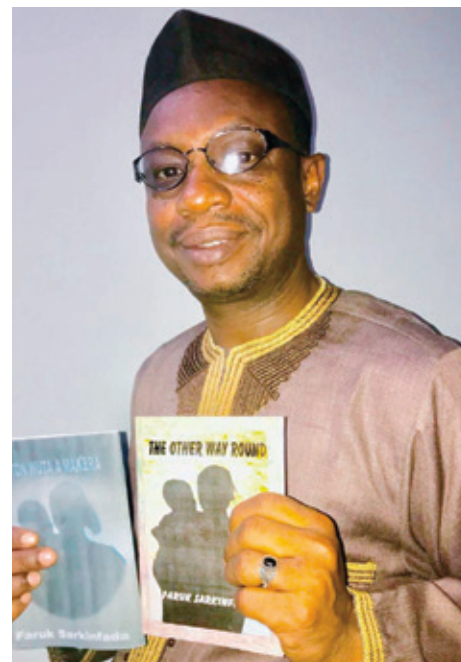
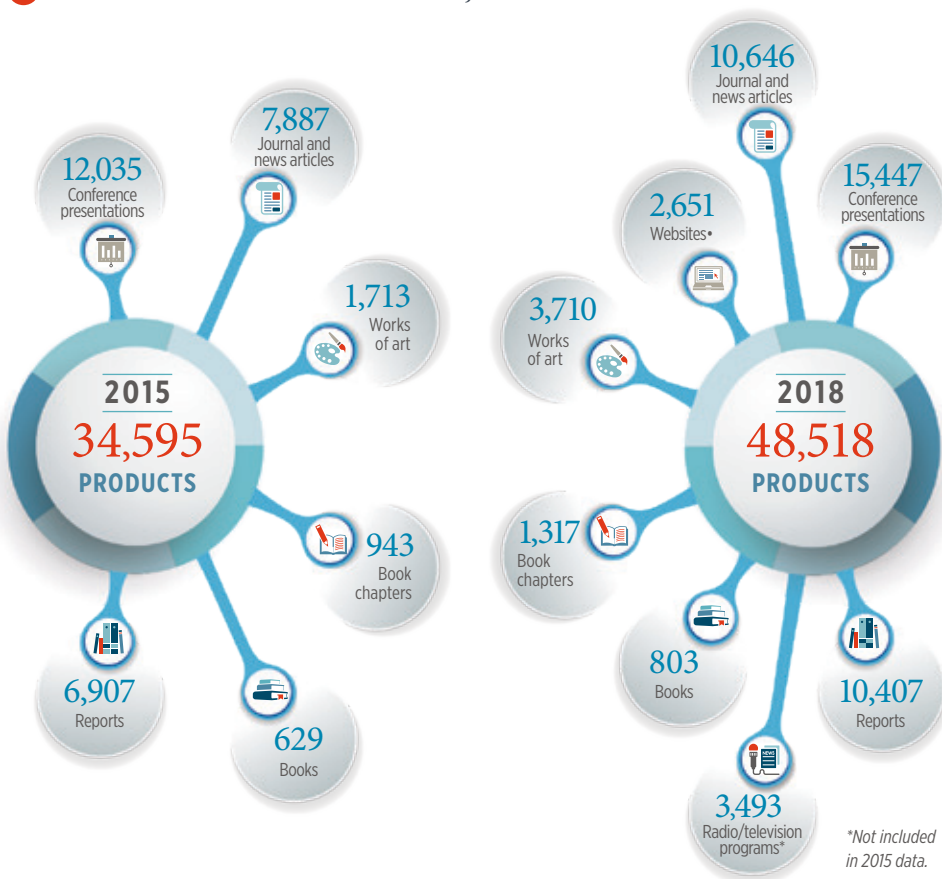
After extensive field experience, Nureyan received the opportunity to work in Washington, DC, at the Save the Children US head office where she supports a global portfolio for the Emergency Health and Nutrition team.

**Above:** Nureyan Zunong (center, in blue) coordinated the emergency response in a local middle school after a 6.1 magnitude earthquake struck Ludian County, Yunnan, China in 2014.

## IFP SOCIAL JUSTICE FOOTPRINT

IFP Fellows are committed to exposing social injustices across all mediums. The IFP Social Justice Footprint is a calculation of the various products or outputs that IFP alumni respondents have created related to social justice. By sharing knowledge related to social justice issues, IFP alumni are raising awareness to issues of importance and becoming voices in the struggle. The products created include works of art, journal articles, books, and conference presentations. In 2018, the total number of products continues to indicate the sustained role that IFP alumni respondents are having in shedding a light on key issues.

### PRODUCTS RELATED TO SOCIAL JUSTICE



**Top:** Marta Juana López Batzín received her Master's degree in Politics and Public Administration from the Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Occidente in Mexico. In Guatemala, Marta is an advocate for indigenous rights and education.

**Above:** Faruk Sarkinfada from Nigeria posing with the English and Hausa versions of his book, *The Other Way Round*. The novel challenges traditional practices of female genital mutilation in the Hausa region. Faruk earned his Ph.D. in Public Health from the University of Liverpool, UK.



### Key Takeaways

- IFP has contributed to a sustainable body of social justice products, contributing to fields of study such as education, human rights, health, gender, and the environment.
- Social justice advocacy is critical for alumni respondents at the local, national, and international levels: 76.3% of respondents indicate that their communities come to them to advocate for social justice.
- IFP alumni respondents who are public officials have been able to advocate for social justice in national and international systems, drafting laws and spearheading campaigns. These alumni attribute their strengthened leadership skills to IFP.

# POWER OF THE IFP GLOBAL NETWORK

IFP supported fellowships for like-minded individuals across 22 countries that have a shared scholarship experience and commitment to social justice. All Fellows met during their advanced study program, a network that would not have been created had IFP not taken place. More than ever, the IFP global network is critical to support and sustain the legacy and impact of IFP's investment. This section highlights examples of alumni working together for collective impact, and focuses on the IFP global network in promoting sustained commitment to social justice.

86.2% of alumni respondents indicated being in touch with other IFP alumni since the 2015 IFP Global Alumni Survey. Most respondents were in touch every few months, with the primary purpose of communication being to exchange knowledge and information (49.0%).



IFP Alumnae Marta Juana López, Gladys Bala, Magaly Arrecis, Elsa Hernández and Dina Mazariegos (left to right) work together at the Universidad de San Carlos in Guatemala. They have advocated for the inclusion of indigenous rights in Guatemala's constitution and intellectual property protection for indigenous female weavers.

## ALUMNI JOINT ORGANIZATIONS OR PROGRAMS

One of ten alumni respondents indicated working with another IFP alum on a joint organization or program. These alumni were located worldwide and collaborated on programs related to education, health, and community development. As noted previously in this report, 11% of the new organizations reported by alumni respondents have been created with other IFP alumni.

*"We formed the Young Nigerian Women Entrepreneurs Network."*

—ALUMNA, NIGERIA

*"Together with [alumnus from India], we have developed a program called Sports for Peace and Trade which involves using sports to [promote] peace and business entrepreneurship among the youth of India and Kenya."*

—ALUMNUS, KENYA

## WORKING TOGETHER ON SOCIAL ISSUES

Within a number of countries, 23.8% of alumni respondents are working together on joint social justice campaigns. These campaigns speak to social justice work at a national level, and contribute to fields of study supported by IFP.

*"[We are] part of the coalition on land rights issues in Tanzania through Landesa Tanzania."*

—ALUMNA, TANZANIA

*"In Chiapas, in 2015 we created an intercultural space for reflection on issues of indigenous law, the environment, climate change and gender."*

—ALUMNUS, MEXICO



## SUPPORTING IFP ALUMNI ORGANIZATIONS

Approximately half of alumni respondents (46.0%) indicate that there is an IFP alumni organization in their countries. Alumni organizations were created in most countries prior to the end of IFP; however, their sustainability has varied. Although some organizations have thrived and are strong social justice advocates in their countries, such as Ghana and Indonesia, others have either been informal groupings of IFP alumni or loose associations of subgroups of alumni.

Alumni organizations that have been successful have been able to promote social justice work and sustain the IFP model and promotion of social justice. The IFP alumni organization in Ghana was recently profiled in a research journal about the impact of fellowship programs on alumni networks.<sup>5</sup> The work of these organizations highlights the potential impact of sustainable groupings of alumni that are furthering the vision of their scholarship program.



Members of the Indonesian Social Justice Network meet with the Vice President of Indonesia, Mr. Mohammad Jusuf Kalla, in 2015.



### Key Takeaways

- IFP alumni leveraged their IFP experience to create a cadre of emerging leaders working together on social justice issues. One in ten alumni respondents indicated working with other IFP alumni on organizations, and one in four have worked together on social justice campaigns.
- Alumni organizations sustained in some countries more than others. When successful, they are an opportunity for IFP alumni to work together on social justice issues and use the IFP model as a launching pad for organizational setup and sustainability.

<sup>5</sup> Campbell, A.C. & Baxter, A.R. (2018). Exploring the attributes and practices of alumni associations that advance social change. *International Journal of Educational Development*. DOI: 10.1016/s41307-017-0077-1.

## CASE STUDY

### Indonesian Social Justice Network

363 IFP Alumni Members

Founded 2006

Jakarta, Indonesia

The Indonesian Social Justice Network (ISJN) was founded in Jakarta in 2006 during a meeting of about 30 Indonesian IFP alumni. Leveraging the local value of their IFP degrees, the small group decided to combine their individual capabilities into a network focused on maintaining the IFP mission of social justice. Today, there are 363 ISJN members across each province in Indonesia who work in a variety of professional fields, including two people in the National House of Representatives and one member on the United Nations Committee of the Right of Persons with Disabilities.

ISJN has upheld IFP's mission in several ways. In 2010, the Yogyakarta chapter organized and launched the first annual Social Justice Youth Camp. The local Indonesian government has contributed funding and marketing for the event and, in 2016, Ford Foundation in Indonesia also began funding the camp. ISJN has also contributed to academic knowledge about social justice issues, including publishing a social justice academic journal and a book that highlights key social justice themes. ISJN conducts research that informs a social justice index. This index has become a key component of tracking social injustice and advocating for policy changes at the local and national levels in Indonesia.



A group of students complete a group project at the Social Justice Youth Camp in Seram Island, Indonesia.

Now, ISJN is seeking to expand their network's impact beyond Indonesia. After organizing several international social justice forums and conferences where activists share research and coordinate social justice projects, ISJN is planning to build a global network of IFP alumni. By creating this international network, ISJN aims to bring together international leaders from IFP to combat local injustices around the world.

# STUDY REFLECTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Higher education and social justice are inextricably linked. By providing access to education, a scholarship program provides access to knowledge and opportunity. For individuals who otherwise would not have this chance, it can open a door to new personal and professional growth. However, it can also raise challenges, and will not remove all obstacles, as we have learned over the past five years of our study. This section provides a reflection on what our study has learned, and how this information raises considerations for higher education programming and international scholarships.

## WHAT ARE WE LEARNING ABOUT ALUMNI TRACKING STUDIES?

### Alumni engagement in longitudinal studies is challenging.

Embarking on a 10-year study, we anticipated decreasing engagement among alumni over time. This is a real constraint of our study and other similar studies, and we have to be aware of the limitations of our conclusions. Over time, we have gotten more interest and engagement from IFP alumni in countries that we have been able to visit in person, and countries where we conducted qualitative fieldwork. We have also found greater engagement in countries where the local international partners, who implemented the programs, still engage with alumni and are able to assist our study. It is crucial to consider these support mechanisms.

### Incentives are supportive.

For two cycles, we have distributed modest financial awards on a competitive basis to IFP alumni who completed the 2015 and 2018 IFP Global Alumni Surveys, respectively. The Ford Foundation committed funding to these awards at the beginning of the study, and we aligned the call for award proposals to the survey deadlines. This allowed alumni to engage in our study while generating support for their work. Although our team was aware of the self-selection bias of linking the surveys to eligibility for these awards, we also found that more than 700 of the alumni who completed the first survey (not all of whom applied to the awards), completed the second survey as well.

### Learning from other stakeholders is as important as learning from the alumni.

We have found that the voices of the IFP alumni are integral; however, so are the perspectives of local communities and organization members on the impacts of the IFP alumni and their work. Although this report does not present the findings of the 2018 Organizations Survey, we are preparing a groundbreaking analysis that will link the findings of the alumni to members in their organizations that can speak to alumni roles in promoting organizational change. This analysis, available in Fall 2019, will explore the work IFP alumni are doing, told from complementary perspectives.

## HOW CAN OUR RESEARCH CONTRIBUTE TO THE FIELD?

### Higher education scholarships are critical and needed.

Our report captures a small sampling of the stories of IFP alumni who were able to persevere and grow professionally as a result of their advanced academic degrees. As noted throughout our study, the alumni's successes have not been without challenges. Nevertheless, the conclusions of our findings indicate that most IFP alumni feel strongly that the advanced degree they received helped them persevere in their careers, and that they would not have gotten this opportunity without the support from the fellowship.

### Social justice, while defined in many ways, is deeply personal to the IFP alumni.

Having been the beneficiaries of a social justice fellowship program, IFP alumni are promoting social justice in many different ways: in their personal behavior, in advocating for the social justice of others, and in promoting equitable practices in their organizations. They also have a deeper awareness of what social justice is and how they can promote it through their work, thanks to the fellowship.

### Alumni power through collective impact.

Although not all IFP alumni are in contact with each other, and relationships among alumni vary by country and region, in cases where IFP alumni have been able to collaborate on activities, programs, or in organizations, they have noted a shared sense of purpose and identity that helps them work together successfully and pursue joint activities. Support of alumni networks can be very successful in bringing together catalysts of change who have a shared identity, and who have common characteristics and aspirations. Promoting these alumni and their collective action can speak directly to programs' sustainable impacts on a greater scale.

# ABOUT THE IFP ALUMNI TRACKING STUDY

The IFP Alumni Tracking Study explores the personal pathways and career trajectories of alumni of the Ford Foundation International Fellowships Program (IFP). Launched in 2013 with support from the Ford Foundation, the study is being carried out by the Center for Academic Mobility Research and Impact at the Institute of International Education (IIE). Between 2001 and 2013,

IFP supported graduate-level education for 4,305 emerging social justice leaders from 22 countries. IIE is collecting data at the global, regional, and country levels using a combination of surveys and local fieldwork. The Center plans to publish ongoing findings from the tracking study until the study concludes in 2023.

## STUDY TIMELINE



## OTHER REPORTS IN THIS SERIES

### *Social Justice and Sustainable Change: The Impacts of Higher Education*

April 2016

This first report shares the results of the 2015 IFP Global Alumni Survey and the responses of 1,861 IFP alumni from 22 countries. The findings show that investing in higher education for individuals can have significant multiplier effects for communities, organizations, and societies.

### *Leaders, Contexts, and Complexities: IFP Impacts in Latin America*

November 2017

Our third report shares the stories of IFP alumni in Brazil, Guatemala, and Mexico based on interviews and focus groups with 268 alumni and stakeholders, painting a complex picture that highlights the opportunities of IFP against the challenges posed by local social and political realities.

### *Social Justice Leaders in Action: IFP Impacts in Asia*

March 2017

Our second report provides an in-depth look at the lives and careers of IFP alumni in India, Indonesia, and the Philippines, detailing the different pathways alumni have taken and the ways they have leveraged their skills and networks to effect change. The report includes the perspectives of 274 IFP alumni and stakeholders.

### *Transformational Leaders and Social Change: IFP Impacts in Africa and the Middle East*

July 2018

Our fourth report provides important insights into the personal, organizational, community, and societal impacts of IFP alumni in Kenya, Nigeria, Palestine, and South Africa, drawn from the perspectives of 361 IFP alumni and stakeholders.

Read our reports: [www.iie.org/Research-and-Insights/IFP-Alumni-Tracking-Study](http://www.iie.org/Research-and-Insights/IFP-Alumni-Tracking-Study)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Throughout the first five years of the IFP Alumni Tracking Study, two key members of the IIE study team stood by me and guided the research and engagement activities: Zehra Mirza and Andrea Brown Murga. Zehra Mirza oversaw quantitative data collection and was a key contributor in the administration and analysis of the 2018 IFP Global Alumni Survey. She compiled the key themes identified in this report. Andrea Brown Murga led IFP alumni engagement and coordinated qualitative fieldwork in 10 countries and two rounds of the IFP alumni awards. She also was a contributing author on three of the four reports published to date. Even though they are no longer affiliated with the study, their contributions have been immense.

This report would not have been possible without contributions from key members on the study team: Bridget Barry supported the analysis and provided valuable input on key findings; Hayden Murray lead the composition of the alumni case studies and collated the photos for the report; Shruti Sheshadri conducted preliminary cleaning and analyses of the survey data; and Jennifer Brand coordinated all administrative aspects surrounding the report release. Rajika Bhandari and Peggy Blumenthal provided support in reviewing drafts of the report. Finally, Catherine Morris and Shana Childs disseminated the report findings to the media and wider audiences.

The Ford Foundation has been an insightful partner on this project, particularly Darren Walker and Hilary Pennington, who have continued to guide and inspire our work. Kay Lee provides essential support in the implementation of the study, as has the IFP Advisory Council: Susan Berresford, Nancy Cantor, Francisco Cigarroa, Ambassador Donald McHenry, David Navarette, and Barron M. Tenny.

The IFP Global Alumni Survey also benefited from the insights of the Expert Working Group: Evelyn Anyal, Jorge Balán, William Dant, Judith Diers, Tamara Fox, Benjamin Lough, Amparo Hofmann-Pinilla, Martha Loerke, Mary McDonnell, Patricia Rosenfield, and Ankita Suri.

Finally, we would not have findings were it not for the time and perspectives offered by the IFP alumni. Over the past five years, we have heard from over 2,000 alumni across the world, and their stories continue to inspire us and nourish the fellowship's rich legacy.

MIRKA MARTEL

March 2019



## INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

### Center for Academic Mobility Research and Impact

Since 1919, the Institute of International Education (IIE) has been a world leader in international education, working to build more peaceful and equitable societies by advancing scholarship, building economies, and promoting access to opportunity. As a not-for-profit with 19 offices and affiliates worldwide, IIE collaborates with a range of corporate, government, and foundation partners across the globe to design and manage scholarship, study abroad, workforce training, and leadership development programs. The IIE Center for Academic Mobility Research and Impact brings together IIE's in-house research expertise to conduct and disseminate timely research in the field of international student and faculty mobility. The Center is also a leader in studying the impact of international exchange, leadership, and scholarship programs. The Center is currently carrying out a 10-year longitudinal impact study of the Ford Foundation International Fellowships Program (IFP), among other projects.

## THE FORD FOUNDATION

The Ford Foundation is an independent, nonprofit grant-making organization. For more than 80 years, it has worked with courageous people on the frontlines of social change worldwide, guided by its mission to strengthen democratic values, reduce poverty and injustice, promote international cooperation, and advance human achievement. With headquarters in New York, the foundation has offices in Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. The Ford Foundation International Fellowships Program (IFP) was initiated in 2001 through the single largest grant in the foundation's history and was housed at IIE throughout its operation.